

Moran Works to Increase Agricultural Trade with Cuba

House Passes Moran Amendment to Facilitate Sale of American Commodities

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today successfully offered an amendment to the Financial Services Appropriations bill to increase the ability of U.S. agriculture producers to market their products to Cuba. Moran's amendment prohibits funding for enforcement of a rule by the Department of Treasury that changed how payments are made by Cuban importers of U.S. agriculture commodities.

"The United States needs to have a presence in Cuba and our agricultural products are a way to accomplish that goal," Moran said. "The Department of Treasury regulation abruptly and unjustifiably changed the rules of trade after nearly five years and disrupted the ability of American producers to sell their products to Cuba. Unilateral sanctions do not work and there is no reason for our own government to make these sales more difficult."

In 2005, against the will of Congress, the Department of Treasury changed its interpretation of the cash payment in advance rule as it relates to agriculture exports to Cuba. The change caused Cuban payments to be made for U.S. agricultural commodities before the ships leave U.S. ports rather than making payment upon delivery. Agriculture exports to Cuba were on the rise from 2001 to March of 2005, but the change resulted in decreases in agricultural trade between the two countries. Moran's amendment prohibits Department of Treasury funds from being used to administer, implement or enforce its change of the payment of cash in advance rule. Moran also successfully offered this amendment in spending bills in 2005 and 2006.

"This change is contrary to our normal trading practices and has only slowed and frustrated trade," Moran said. "It is important that the U.S. have a consistent trade policy to be a reliable supplier. Otherwise, Cuba will purchase agriculture products elsewhere. We only hurt our American farmers by allowing this rule to persist."

Moran helped resume agricultural exports to Cuba in 2001 with the passage of the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. The legislation allowed for the export of agriculture products to Cuba for the first time in 38 years. Moran traveled to Cuba in December to meet with government and trade officials. He is a senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

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